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GERMAN POLITICS

AND

BRITISH POLITICS

BY

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CURRENT EVENTS.

GERMAN POLITICS.

The national feeling of the German is now one of the great forces with which the world must count, and it seems to be just as strong and just as fierce in Austrians like Hermann Bahr, whose prose dithyramb on German might I quoted in a previous *Quarterly*, and in Bavarian Catholics and Holstein farmer boys as it is in Prussian Major-Generals. Yet the German is young in national and political life, which may be said to have really commenced for him with the political tumults and agitations of 1848. But since that time at any rate no nation has had more experience of Parliaments and under the greatest variety of systems, Imperial, Prussian, Saxon, Bavarian, Würtembergian and the rest. Every German knows the working of at least three or four different parliamentary and electoral systems. But nevertheless, the political life of the German as a whole receives its peculiar character almost altogether from the Parliamentary system of the Empire as embodied in the Reichstag, and from that of Prussia, together with that unique institution, the Bundesrat, a sort of Council of Princes which may rather be said to have control of the Parliamentary system of the Empire than to be within it.

To see how this Parliamentary system is worked and the kind of training it has given the German nation, let us first take a look at the Reichstag on one of its great historical days under Bismarck.

Bismarck in the Reichstag.

In a sitting of the Reichstag, on the 11th January, 1887, Prince Bismarck made a very candid and impressive speech on the policy and future of Germany. The occasion was the proposal brought forward by the Government to increase the effective peace strength of the army from 427,274 men to 468,409 men for the period of seven years, on which at that time all army estimates were based. Bismarck began by giving his opinion on their political relations with Russia. We must remember that in 1878 at the Berlin Congress he had supported

Austria-Hungary in acquiring the protectorate over Bosnia and Herzegovina and thereby effected a reconciliation with that Power and laid the basis for what eventually became a very firm alliance. But he was not inclined to go further in a Balkan policy against Russia. He reprimands very sharply a large section of the press for the attempt it was making to drag the Government into further anti-Russian operations in Bulgaria, "with ulterior designs reaching to Turkey" (*hinten weit in der Türkei*). He declared that was a dangerous policy which he would never countenance even if he was in danger of being considered in Austria and still more in Hungary as too friendly to Russia. But while he denied there was any good reason for hostility between Germany and Russia, he admitted frankly that the case was otherwise between Austria and Russia. Between these countries there was a real rivalry and competition of interests which made it difficult to maintain peace. (*Dort liegt die Sache anders. Es giebt wirklich rivalisierende und miteinander konkurrierende Interessen*, etc.). Bismarck's idea was to hold the balance as discreetly as he could between the rival interests of Russia and Austria and to refuse to be drawn into an aggressive policy in the Balkans. "The whole Eastern question," he said in his usual blunt but forcible and pregnant style, "is no war-question for us." In short, Bismarck, while he was anxious to conciliate Austrian-Germans, was not willing to support Magyars and Pan-Germans in an ambitious Balkan policy.

After having declared thus clearly and emphatically his policy with regard to the conflicting interests of Austria and Russia, he made the briefest reference to Germany's relations with Italy and England, which he declared were of so friendly a nature that they need not be taken at all into consideration in discussing the military question. Then Bismarck came to the pith of his speech, the relations of Germany and France. It was in these, he said, that the real necessity for the strengthening of the army lay. He was of opinion, he said, that "the historic process"—so he called it euphemistically—which had gone on for 800 years between France and them was not ended and that they must be prepared to see it continued from the French side. They were now in possession of the object of contention (Alsace-Lorraine). They had no reason to fight.

. . . But whenever the French came to believe that their



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army was more numerous or better trained, or their artillery superior, or their powder better, these were all causes which under certain circumstances might make the French government decide for war. And there was a possibility that in such a war they might be beaten; he would not say he feared that, 'but nobody could deny the possibility of it.' It was only fearless civilian gentlemen, "the bold Parliamentary strategist," who thought there was no need of strengthening the army. The Chancellor then spoke solemnly on the consequences of defeat in war, and the responsibility members of Parliament would be under if by their vote they brought such a misfortune on the country. He had heard much, he said, about ministerial responsibility [*the absence of which in the German constitution was and still is a sore spot with Reformers*], but he heard little about the responsibility of members of Parliament for opinions and votes which deliberately weakened the military power of the country and might bring it to misfortune. Where was the tribunal to try such men? If they continued to act so, then he would move that such a tribunal be established.

Then he proceeded to describe the terrible consequences for Germany of defeat. The land would be ravaged as old people used to tell him it was ravaged and exhausted by Napoleon in 1807. A crushing indemnity would be imposed on them. They would have to give up Alsace-Lorraine and perhaps more of the Rhinelands; they would have to restore the Kingdom of Hanover [*pocketed by Prussia in 1866*]; they would have to return Schleswig certainly to Denmark, and they would probably have to give burdensome guarantees to France for better treatment of their Polish subjects. Then he told them with characteristic frankness that they would have to act towards France in a similar manner if they were again victors. The war of 1870, he told them, would be child's play compared with the next war in its results to France. Here are his own words:

We would take care that for thirty years France should be put out of condition for attack upon us, and that for at least a generation we should be completely secure from her. The war of 1870 would be child's play in comparison with that of—a year I know not when—in its results for France. (Cries of Bravo). Thus on both sides there would be the same endeavour; each would seek to bleed the other white.

Bismarck then concluded his discourse by telling the members that, whether they voted the increase or not, the governing powers of the empire (die verbündeten Regierungen) would carry it through by means of the Bundesrat. And here he explained how, in his opinion, the constitution of the Empire gave this power of independent action to the Bundesrat and even, in ultimate resort, to the Kaiser alone. Therefore, he said, any opposition they could offer would be of no practical effect. In opposing the Government's proposals they were compromising themselves needlessly in a matter in which they had no constitutional powers to give effect to their will. . . . The attempt to transform the Emperor's army, such as we have hitherto had in Germany, into a Parliament's army would not succeed. . . . It could not possibly be the desire of the German nation [*Bismarck from the beginning to the end of his career always laid great stress on this distinction between the real will of the people and the ideas and actions of their Parliamentary delegates*] that such an important matter as its security should depend on the will of constantly changing Parliamentary majorities.

That speech of Bismarck reveals the situation of the German people, politically and morally, better than any other document I know of, and the spirit which it breathes is that by which the German people has been ruled and guided ever since. It has even hardened under the inspiration of a policy of world domination and conquest which Bismarck, as we see, vigorously discountenanced. But what a situation it was even in his time! That speech of his, if you realize its significance as made to the assembled delegates of one of the most cultured and powerful nations of Europe, proclaims the struggle of two hundred years for democratic freedom and parliamentary government to have been futile and, in its principles, absurd. Morally it blots out a thousand years of endeavours to christianize civilization as if they had never been. It contains a few phrases which recognize faintly the existence of a more humanitarian standard, but it really takes us back to Cato's *Carthago delenda est*. For that was what Bismarck meant. He meant that France, that 40 millions of the most humane, intelligent, and sensitive people in the world should be broken in spirit and power beyond retrieval, broken and bowed to the earth, with all that that implies of ruthless slaughter and

ravage on the part of the victors. And the assembled delegates of the German people shouted with one voice "Bravo!" * And note that while Prince Bismarck spoke with authority as the official voice of the German people as to what they would do, what he said about the intentions and spirit of France was after all only a conjecture.

The Crisis in Prussia.

There are many now who are surprised at the change which has transformed the countrymen of Kant, Herder, Fichte, and Goethe into the countrymen of Bernhardi, von Tirpitz, and von der Goltz. They forget perhaps that even at the beginning of the last century they were the countrymen of Clausewitz, Blücher and Jahn. There is nothing so unnatural in that development or in that other which replaced Humboldts and Bunsens by Delbrücks and Dernburgs, and the Liberal orators and professors of the Frankfurt Parliament by delegates who follow half constrained or wholly sympathetic the State policy of military Junkerdom. The intellectual and the political transformation have gone hand in hand. The Napoleonic conquests in Germany and the treatment of Prussia after Jena had much to do with it. And immature forms of Liberalism in the earlier period, rash speaking Radicals and Republicans with no eyes for reality—the German Byleases and Spenders of the period—contributed no less than German Particularism and the numerous German dynasties to make a democratic form of union impossible for Germany. But the great failure was in Prussia where the popular rising in 1848, though it brought forth a new constitution, was followed by a reaction which made that constitution ineffective as a means of progress, at least of democratic progress. But the Parliamentary struggle was continued by a number of able men amongst the Liberals and Progressives who in spite of the very restricted franchise were able to gather a solid majority behind them. The crisis came in 1872 over the question of a great reorganization and increase of the Prussian army which King William and von Roon had decided was necessary. They very nearly failed. The King talked of resigning. But Bis-

*See First Bismarck's Reden. Erster Band, p. 246.

marck took the reins, defied Parliamentary majorities and Budget Commissions, got the Upper House to throw out the Budget entirely, thus leaving the State expenditure unprovided for, and then carried out his projects by virtue of what he called the king's prerogative to act in emergencies (notstand). This state of affairs lasted four years.

It was not exactly what is called a coup d'état. The Prussian government does not make coups d'état; it only makes arbitrary extensions and applications of a constitution which has been carefully framed to admit of such. You can read Bismarck's own defence of it in his "Reminiscences." But it was a complete defiance of Parliamentary majorities, of what we call representative government.

One does not know how the conflict might have ended, but just at this time the old question of Schleswig-Holstein and its relation to Denmark came to a head, and Bismarck's bold and clever handling of the situation began to convince even Prussian Liberals that they had got a master of diplomacy and statecraft in this awful Junker, this Prussian Strafford and man of hopelessly antiquated ideas. Bismarck first persuaded Austria into a joint occupation of the Danish provinces, then manoeuvred her into a bad position there, and then into a worse. The inevitable result was the war which Bismarck had long considered necessary for Prussia and for which von Roon and Moltke had made thorough preparation. Austria was defeated and Bismarck came back to his Parliamentary opponents with the whole of Schleswig-Holstein in his pocket, and also the kingdom of Hanover, Kur-Hesse and Hanau which he had snapped up at the beginning of the war. Prussia had become one of 'the great Powers.' He asked for a vote of indemnity and got it. The king said to him, was that not an admission they had both done wrong. "No," he said, "it is the Parliamentarians who are admitting they have been wrong." And that was the real aspect of the matter. Representative government, democratic freedom or whatever else you may call government by the majority of the people's chosen representatives, sank out of sight in Prussia as the result of that conflict. No efforts of either the Liberal or the Social Democratic party since have been able to procure any modification of 'the three class franchise' by which 200,000 rich men of 'the

first class' have the same voting power as six millions of poor men.

Failure of Constitutional Reform in the Reichstag.

As for the constitution of the Empire, Bismarck's speech in 1887 shows us clearly enough the principles on which it was founded and how it was worked in his time. There is no essential difference in it yet, although appearances are better kept up, and the people have been pleased at times with a great show of fighting over Estimates for the Army and Navy, with crises in the Reichstag, negotiations with the different political groups, concessions to the Poles or to the Centre. But though the Government occasionally condescends to accept small defeats, the real power in reserve remains where it was, and the Kaiser has never been diverted in the slightest by the hostile criticism or votes of a majority in the Reichstag from his policy of accumulating forces sufficient to dominate Europe. In 1906 a coalition of the Catholic Centre and the Social Democrats made an effort to bring the Kaiser's expansion policy and his command of the army under some control by reducing the estimates for the forces in South-West Africa. The Chancellor, von Bülow, simply dissolved the House and passed the word — it is his own expression — to vote against the Social Democrats at the second ballots. The Social Democrats lost nearly half their seats, although the number of their votes increased by half a million. Liberals united with Conservatives to defeat them. The event seems to mark the triumph of the Kaiser's national policy over old questions of constitutional freedom in the general sentiment of the nation. Since that time, although the Social Democrat vote was largely increased at the election of 1912, the Government has easily found parliamentary majorities to pass its steadily increasing Armament Bills. Questions of constitutional reform have fallen into a half dormant condition.

The New National Policy.

Of course there had been a great change in the position and policy of Germany since Bismarck's time. By the twentieth century Germany's growth in population, commerce, wealth and military power had long placed her beyond any

real fear of aggression. Prussia was no longer the small state surrounded by powerful enemies against whom it was necessary to provide exceptional measures of protection. It was another programme altogether now which heralded new and increasing estimates for the Army and Navy. When the young Kaiser took the helm from Bismarck in 1890, a magnificent programme of expansion commenced, embracing colonial acquisitions, sea-power and the extension of German supremacy in one form or another through the Balkans and Turkey to the East, and who knows what more! "Without the consent of Germany's ruler nothing must happen in any part of the world." So the Kaiser spoke fifteen years ago, and when I read German political writers on the relations of Germany to Holland or on the strengthening of the German population in the Baltic provinces of Russia, I find it hard to say where their ambitions stop short, but I see that not a few countries have reason to feel that the "friendly penetration" of Germans with their new ideal of *Deutschtum* is practically forming an alien power in the midst of them.*

Since Bismarck's time also Germany has made the decisive choice between Russia and Austria which the Kaiser's new policy required. The necessary combinations had become easier. Austria was no longer the half-hostile Power of the Seventies. The German-Austrian had been swept into the swelling current of *Deutschtum* and the Magyar aristocrat had realized how closely his class interests were bound up with those of the Prussian Junker in keeping down crowds of Slavs, Poles, Croats and other unprivileged races, not to speak of German Social Democrats. The Catholic Centre has been conciliated; all good Germans now speak of Bismarck's famous *Kulturkampf* as a big blunder, and there are signs that the old idea of the "larger union" with Austria, a scheme which Austria herself used to favour in the old days, may be revived in some safe form. For the Prussian invention of a Parliamentary system which puts all real power into the hands of the Kaiser and a Council of Princes, makes a wide extension

*See Prof. Paul Samassa, *Deutsche und Niederländer*, and Alfred Geiser, *Das Deutschthum in Russland*. (*Deutsches Reich und Volk*, Munich, 1910).

of the Empire easily possible. Under an appearance of Parliamentary government it can hold as many subject provinces as it likes under a virtually despotic sway. And the more it is extended, the more will the ordinary German feel the need of preserving that almost uncontrolled sway of the central government. For the ideas which Naumann and other writers of the Progressive party cherish of a democratically governed Empire embracing Poles, Slavs, Czechs, etc., can hardly be considered practical.

Liberals blame the limited ideas and narrow class politics of the Social Democrats for the failure of constitutional reforms. A *Fortschritt* writer says: "Only by incessant work for Liberalism, only by the election of sound Liberals . . . who have an intelligent grasp of the national tasks of the German Empire, is it possible to wrest the helm from the hands of the reactionaries and introduce the practical policy of progress which the Social Democrats perhaps desire but are unable to accomplish by their dogmatic limitations and isolating class politics (*klassenmässigen Isolierung*)."*

Prince von Bülow's View of the Situation.

The view which a rather liberal-minded Prussian statesman (I mean as distinguished from a typical Junker willing to rule by mere force) takes of the situation may be seen in the chapters on Social Democracy in Prince von Bülow's recent book, *Imperial Germany*. It virtually amounts to this, that the Prussian state with its monarchical and military character is the backbone of Germany's political life and at the same time the antithesis of the Social Democratic ideal. If the Government were to make concessions to the Social Democrats, as it did when the king ordered that "sad retreat of the troops" before the Berlin populace in 1848, the State, Prince von Bülow tells us, would go to pieces in the general bewilderment of Prussian officials and soldiers, whose loyalty is rooted in their respect for Prussian discipline and order and in their confidence in the strength of the Government. And it is hardly possible to make concessions to them in the Parliament of the Empire when you cannot do so in Prussia, though some local

*Erich Eyck. *Die Sozialdemokratie*. Berlin, 1912.

Governments, like that of Bavaria, may be able to do so. Further, the Social Democratic party is revolutionary in character, but is only dangerous, in the opinion of the Prince, so far as members of the educated classes join it. "Wherever the proletariat has fought alone as in the June battle in Paris and during the Commune, it has always been defeated." If Social Democracy tried to attain its ends by force or threats, the Government would have no difficulty in suppressing it by force. But a Government can no longer use violence to repress mere opinions however foolish or dangerous to the State. [*—this is a warning to Junker militarism.*] It is "the task of Ministers," therefore, to separate the Social Democratic party from "the intelligent middle class," and they must, therefore, whatever their "inner convictions are," rule in such a way and by such management of the various political groups as not "to rebel Liberalism." If left to its own resources and unaided by the middle classes, Social Democracy "cannot attain a numerical majority in the nation." Lastly, Socialism is a dream, the poor man's dream, and naturally the workman, struggling hard for a living, is apt to succumb to "the seductive sophistries" of Socialistic teachings. We must show the working class that Socialist promises are illusory and that the actual provisions made for the poor by the State and society as they exist are worth more than promises which can never be fulfilled. We must fight steadily for the souls of our workmen, must seek to win back the Social Democratic workmen to the state and the monarchy. Our fight is not directed against the workmen; its aim is to rescue them from the snares of the Social Democrats, and to accustom them to the idea of the State. We must especially prevent the middle class intellectuals from drifting into touch with the Social Democratic movement. The true means for these ends is to pursue a courageous wide-minded national policy which brings the best powers of the nation into action and maintains in it satisfaction with the present conditions of life. And to do this ministers must have resolution and energy and not be afraid of a bold policy.

Such is the view which ex-Chancellor von Bülow has of the situation in Germany and he represents the more moderate and liberal-minded statesmanship of Prussia. He is doubtless right in regard to the illusions or golden promises of Socialistic

Labour leaders. Socialism is no more likely to keep its golden promises than many other 'isms', equally absolute and one-sided, have done. Otherwise Prince von Bülow's view, which I have given almost entirely in his own phrases, practically amounts to this, that the Prussian system must be maintained at all costs as the backbone of German political life, and that every effort should be made to occupy the mind of the nation with a "vigorous national policy" rather than with mere constitutional questions. Also, that there is no need to fear the working masses as a force, meaning, I suppose, that modern artillery makes mob revolutions hopeless.

I do not pretend to argue that the Prussian electoral system is irrational, or even a moral blemish; it might be logically maintained that it is more rational than our own which gives the same voting power to an illiterate mechanic or a drunken street loafer as it gives to the President of a National Bank or a University. We have so far succeeded in dodging the dangers of such a system rather than in overcoming them scientifically. And it has been at the cost of making our political leadership rather uncandid and neglectful of realities, as I will show in the article that follows this. The German system recognizes the realities of life as ours does not, and it is conceivable that its principle of a highly restricted franchise combined with conditions of publicity and free speech might have been worked with better results for humanity than the spectacle we are now beholding in Europe. German Liberals blame the unpractical talk and schemes of the Social Democrats for driving the Kaiser to rely more than he might have done on Junkerdom and "Prussianism." But that is hardly sufficient to account for the terribly significant phenomena of Germanic development. The ferocious speeches of the Kaiser and his Generals, the excessive pre-occupation with war and the immense preparations for it, the world-wide system of espionage and conspiracy which has made the "friendly penetration" of other countries by Germans equivalent to implanting camps of aliens and enemies amongst them, the new doctrines of the *absolute* right of conquest in itself (which had begun to be regarded as an antiquated tradition of feudalism), and of the *absolute* morality of war proclaimed not only by Bernhardi and Disfurth but by learned professors and jurists, the savage hymns of hate, the official proclamations and

practice of extreme and barbarous principles of reprisal and the exceptionally ruthless methods and usages in warfare, all these show clearly that the modern German is systematizing into a universal law of life and conduct all the occasional violences, excesses or lapses into doubtful procedure which he finds in the history of other successful nations as well as in his own. There is no nation that has not things in its history which it would like to blot out, violences more or less unjustifiable, cruelties that fear or passion drove it to commit, but it has been left for Germany, I could almost say, to erect such excesses into a system, into a fundamental principle of the struggle for existence. Indeed it is the nature of the German to systematize things with a kind of violence and a fine disregard for what the system may lead to. The pious young Schleiermacher does it in theology and reduces religion to a Spinozistic contemplation of the universe; Treitschke does it in German history and writes as if French 'rights of man' and British development of Parliamentary government meant nothing at all for the progress of civilisation; even in a subject of purely historic and aesthetic interest like the sculpture of ancient Rome, Wickhoff theorizes away with profound indifference to the fact that after all there must be a standard of 'what is fitting' somewhere in art.

I am inclined to think also that the triumph of Prussianism is closely connected with German racial feeling and the strong measures the Germans have thought it necessary to take in order to preserve their racial purity and control against the Polish, Jewish and other foreign elements in the nation. No reader of German novelists from Spielhagen to Fontane can fail to see how deep the consciousness of that conflict is in them. At a time when Anglo-Saxonism both in the United States and Great Britain is developing in some democratic confusion under the influence of heterogeneous racial elements, the Germans are making the most determined efforts to maintain and strengthen the Germanic character of civilization amongst the mixed populations of the Eastern provinces. In this conflict also Bismarck was their great man, and his speeches, particularly those of January, 1886, in the Prussian Landtag, sum up the situation with characteristic frankness.

The History of the German.

We must also take into account as explaining a tendency to ruthlessness and brutality in the German, that he has a long and terrible history behind him. Already in the *Nibelungenlied* the atmosphere of the German is sombre and sinister, imposing veracity and doughtiness, I don't doubt it, but ruthless, far more so than in the *Beowulf* of his cousins, the Dane and the Anglo-Saxon.

In Norse history of the 13th and 14th centuries the Germans of Lübeck and the Hanse towns appear as an aggressive people, colonies of them occupying Bergen and other Norse sea-ports and behaving with great insolence to the natives. The story of German commerce and expansion in the Eastern Baltic also as far as Riga and Revel is a pretty rude story in these days, the operations of the Sword-Brethren and the great Teutonic order being mostly a fine mixture of crusading and ruthless filibustering and conquest, varied by uprisings and St. George's Nights on the part of oppressed Letts and other races; a most tumultuous part of the world where Danes, Poles, Swedes, Germans and Russians have all striven for mastery. Czar Peter ended it for the time in 1710 by making the whole district Russian, but there has remained a thin layer of Germans, mostly upper class, landowning nobility and professional men, who have contributed much to the development of these provinces of Russia. There are about 160,000 of them amongst two millions of Slavic farmers and peasants, but for long they were in control of the educational system and energetically opposed attempts at "Russification." The new revival of *Deutschtum* may create a serious problem for Russia in that quarter.

In Germany itself life has been stern and often brutal for the German. Of the doings of von Quitzows, von Bredows, von Jagows and other Junker families in the old Mark Brandenburg, in earlier times, it is useless to speak, for the nobility and gentry of that time seem to have been pretty much the same in all countries, only the comparative weakness of the many small reigning houses in Germany made the license there greater. It is true that commerce and art too could thrive at times in the midst of all that. The civilizing and artistic influences of the guilds in the flourishing Free Towns, especially

in the South, furnish pleasant and picturesque memories of mediæval Germany. One likes the solidity and seriousness which one sees in the faces of German merchants and scholars as Holbeins and Kranachs painted them, but there is plenty of evidence to show that there was an unusual amount of coarseness in the German even for that age. Luther was certainly a hero and even, in his hours of asceticism and inward struggle, a saint; but surely there never was such a saint or founder of a religion for brawling, cursing, jovial anecdotes, and even for frank assertion of the blood, as a certain letter of the pious and much tried Melancthon clearly testifies. Then after the Reformation came the terrible history of a Thirty Years War, a Seven Years War, and other wars, invasions and devastations without number, both foreign and native; Tillys and Wallensteins, Electors, Grand-Dukes, Prince-Bishops and Kaisers have vied with each other in ravaging and wasting lands inhabited by men of their own blood and speech down to a very late date in European history. All that has had its effect on the Germans and on their view of life. For a time, especially in the early days of the French Revolution, this same terrible history of theirs helped to make them ardent disciples of the French Aufklärung and bred apostles of humanitarianism like Lessing and Herder. But Napoleon's misuse of his conquests gave Prussianism—*das spezifische Preussentum* as they call it today—new vitality and wider significance, as you can see in the later Horder and Fichte. The success of Bismarck's policy and the conquests of 1864, 1866, and 1870 completed the making of the German people and gave the world a strong but ruthless nation which will need watching, now that it is in the saddle, to use Bismarck's expression—at at rate as long as it is ruled by Prussian Junkers. The German has been bred in a hard school of life and will not be swayed by sentimental humanities where he is a master. Not only the Kaiser and Bismarck, but all the great Chancellors of the German Empire have given the world, in official speech, the clearest warnings in this respect. "The German nation," said von Bülow in 1907, "sits firmly in the saddle and it will ride down everything that places itself in the way of its well-being and its greatness," and four years afterwards von Bethmann-Hollweg said: "The dominant chord of the passionate feeling which prevails in wide circles is the will of Ger-

many to assert herself in the world with all her strength and capacity." It would be folly to refuse to understand the tone of such utterances.

Later German Thought.

With the success of Bismarck's policy the intellectual tide began to turn in Germany. A new view of life began to find a wide expression in German literature and thought, a view of life which may be described as a revolt against sentimental morality and humanitarianism as unvarnished and a deviation from the laws of universal nature. All transcendental valuations of life, moral or religious, are rejected. For various reasons writers like Ernst Haeckel have had a more widespread and profounder influence on German life than writers like Herbert Spencer have had in England. And although Haeckel's monistic philosophy has some points of contact with the humanitarian principles in Christianity, yet his constant and emphatic assertion that the history of humanity and its civilization is, like all the rest of the history of the universe, a mechanical struggle for existence under "the eternal iron laws of nature", gives a hard and relentless character (as he himself admits), to the doctrine of the survival of the fittest. The result is that his fundamental moral principle, "the Balance of Egoism and Altruism," is ambiguous in application, and while it asks a certain amount of judicious altruism from the individual allows the life of the nation or State a purely egoistic basis in *Realpolitik*. Haeckel even speculates with true German pedantry on the possibility of establishing in mathematical terms with what number of associated persons (*bei welcher Zahl vereinigter Menschen*) this change of moral principle should begin. (See *Die Welträtsel*, chaps. 14 and 19). There is no doubt a truth here which used to be recognized in the old juristic distinction between the state of nature and the state of civil society. Spinoza states it in its boldest and most uncompromising form; but it requires a more cautious formulation than Haeckel's profoundly materialistic identification of mass and morality gives it. English thought is here in its usual ambiguous, not to say helpless, condition. The English Liberalizing professor tends to lose the idea of the State life altogether in an abstract Humanitarianism which the world has

not as yet been able to embody in any organism in which it could be realized, while Conservatism, with more instinct for realities, perhaps, fails to explain itself philosophically.

The influence of Christianity on the history of civilization is severely criticized not only by scientific philosophers like Haeckel, who accept the principle of the struggle for existence, but by a socialistic humanitarian like Dühring, who despises not only Darwinism ("Darwinerei"), but Junkerdom, Hohenzollernism and all the other Prussian ideals of the day as well as the unscientific "mish-mash" of philanthropic sentiment, class prejudice, professional climbing and party politics which in his view makes up the ordinary middle class politician. In Dühring's view Christianity along with Buddhism has done most to establish views hostile to life (*lebensfeindliche Ansichten*). The one has lamed Asia and the other has hindered the higher development (*Aufschwung*) of Europe. Christ is nothing but a late Hebrew intellectual (*der geistige Späthebräer*), and his teaching mostly consists of the usual Hebrew oriental exaggerations of feeling and imagination. His saying "Love your enemies" is a characteristic expression of the Hebrew love of paradox and exaggeration. From this source there has crept into our civilization a tendency to develop a type of hypocrisy. We need a new morality with scientific valuation of life, new politics instead of the "canaille-politics" of to-day; also a new art and a new poetry which shall no longer offend our sense of reality and indulge in an immoral beautifying of the actual.*

"There is a conspiracy of silence against Dühring," a German once said to me, for not only is he a relentless critic of the new Kaiserism (*Cäsarismus*) and its national ideals of conquest, but though he was himself a professor at Berlin for some years, he is rather given to disparaging the profession as consisting chiefly of learned hodmen (*Handwerksgelehrter*) who keep on repeating the phrases of this or that school when they have become empty and unreal. The first edition of Dühring's *Der Werth des Lebens* was published in 1865, and it was just about that time that the great change was taking

*See Dühring's *Der Werth des Lebens*, but especially *Die Judenfrage* and *Soziale Rettung*.

place also in the German view of politics and political ideals as a consequence mainly of the success of Bismarck's methods. Not only French republicanism, but the parliamentary system of England, whose principles and precedents had hitherto furnished the German Liberals with most of their arguments and appeals, began to be spoken of as unsuitable for Germans. Government by Parliamentary majorities, as Bismarck from the first used to argue, was a system adapted to Englishmen which he admitted had worked well in England but not particularly well anywhere else.† A new school of Prussian historians arose who opposed 'the result of historic fact,' (*das historisch Gewordene*) to abstract theories of popular rights, and criticized sharply the Manchester Liberalism of Britain with its gospel of buying and selling superficially decorated with humanitarian and pacifist principles.

Treitschke, who began to lecture in 1865, is the most widely known of this school. He regards the Manchester doctrine as mere individualism and sensualism and therefore thoroughly unGerman. No social harmony could ever arise from it, no sound organization of the State could be based on it and its worship of "what can be counted, measured and weighed." All that was a form of Epicureanism, of *sittlicher Ruheseligkeit*, which I would translate by Carlyle's phrase, "life made soft for everybody." He owes a good deal to Carlyle in certain lines of thought as Dühring does both in thought and phrase. He also expresses a high moral disdain of that narrow-minded commercialism which thinks the Army and the Bureaucracy a burden on the nation. But Treitschke was by birth and temperament a military Junker whom an accidental deafness had debarred from his natural career. Far more significant to me is the change which took place in historians like von Sybel, who had been amongst the National Liberals who had fought Bismarck in the days of the great constitutional conflict and denounced him as a mad reactionary and obscurantist. When von Sybel came

†On one occasion he qualified his admission by adding: "Wait, gentlemen, till we have seen the full effects of Gladstone's extension of the electorate in England." He himself favoured a universal franchise (as a counteraction to Court intrigues and a safety valve), but under a Prussian constitution, where it had little power but to criticize.

to write the history of that conflict some years afterwards he characterized the ardour of the Liberals and Reformers as *ein unklarer enthusiasmus*, a muddle-headed enthusiasm, and summed up in favor of Bismarck's defiance of Parliamentary rule as not really unconstitutional under the Prussian system. He admits that under that system "an ill-intentioned Government can make the control of the Lower House an empty show." But he adds that it is just as true that under the British system "the Lower House by means of its financial control can subject both the Crown and the Upper House to its commands," a proposition which he seems to think balances matters satisfactorily. He also defends Bismarck's unscrupulous manipulation of the Ems telegram which forced Napoleon III into war over the question of the Hohenzollern candidature for the throne of Spain. We can all see now, by the bye, what the planting of Hohenzollern and allied German princes on foreign thrones means.

Von Sybel's recantation is the mark of a great change in a whole class of intellectual Germans. The theory of democratic or popular government, of the sovereign power as residing in the people, fell into discredit. The names of Reformers and Liberal orators became dishonoured names. The popular rising in 1848 in Berlin when students, workmen and professional men fought together at the barricades to secure a free constitution for Prussia, became an ignominious page in German history, and its events were referred to as those of "the year of madness." All the memories and traditions of the struggle for constitutional reform and that more democratic ideal of German unity which had been cherished by the men of the Pauluskirche and the Frankfurt Parliament and the old Liberal opponents of Bismarck suffered that kind of eclipse which a defeated cause is sure to suffer when the opposite cause has securely established itself as the way of providence. The glorification of Prussia and the Hohenzollern dynasty took their place. It was the intellectual victory of Bismarck's principles and ideals. This man with his realities as Sybel says, with his *Realpolitik*, had found a way to realize Germany's unity when Liberal doctrinaires and theorists had shown their incompetency. "History speaks for me," he said simply and proudly. And the ideals of Prussian discipline and order and of Prussian militarism, which had once been hated

by other Germans, became the tradition of the whole nation. And they combined admirably with the new scientific view of life as the prize of the strongest to lead Germany into the path of world conquest and dominion.

The best one could say for the modern German attitude is that it may partly be regarded as a protest against what is unreal and from a purely biological point of view unsound in the sentimental Humanitarianism of to-day with its neglect of national discipline, its virtual condonation of civil disorders, and weak, uncandid handling of all social problems. The Germans have come to regard such sentimentalism as weakening modern civilization and leading inevitably to its decay. And they regard themselves as having a mission to save it, to redeem it from the shams and hypocrisies which are corrupting it. From this point of view while Haeckel and Dühring are in their different ways more scientific expressions of the German view of life, Nietzsche is its most poetic and in one sense most philosophic expression. He really sets the crown on the whole of this Germanic development, political as well as intellectual, which refuses to recognize the right of a sentimental humanitarianism to obstruct the exploitation of reality and rejects Christian ethics as a generous design on the birthright of the strong. Even Harnack's formal separation of religion from the State is only an apologetic application of the same point of view. It is a piece of pure sophistry when Prof. Oncken of Heidelberg denies, or would appear to the American public to be denying, that Nietzsche has his proper and prominent place in this movement of the Germanic spirit, simply because he happened to have, like Treitschke and many Pan-Germans, Slavic blood in his veins and in addition to dislike certain elements in German culture and in the German character. But all the same Nietzsche realized clearly enough that the only nation ever likely to seek inspiration from his programme or to attempt to carry it out was the German.

Reality or the sense of the actual (*Wirklichkeitssinn*) is the watchword of the modern German, and perhaps he makes a very characteristic mistake in supposing we have a standard of reality for human life which is now so clear and fixed that we may learn to apply it with scientific and almost mechanical precision. It is not so. Civilization is a middle term between an ideal of progress and the material conditions of nature, and

man moves with a certain vacillation which at times seems almost hypocritical between these two. But the Germans will probably find that it is just as dangerous to reject the idealistic and sentimental humanities in their scheme of life as it is to shut one's eyes to the stern material conditions, as a large section of the English-speaking democracies seems inclined to do.

BRITISH POLITICS.

The British Empire has had a long and slow growth and that growth has not as a rule been owing to any preconceived scheme of conquest or aggrandizement on the part of the Government. The old American colonies of Britain, for example, originated in the emigration of Englishmen who sought religious and political freedom in the wilds, and although it involved the fall of Dutch rule in the settlements around New York and the disappearance of the North American savage, I have never heard anyone question that the rise of the United States as a final result has been a benefit to civilization and humanity. And it was in defence of these same American colonists and their interests against the grand schemes of expansion cherished by French Canadian governors that Britain was led to the acquisition of Eastern Canada. The conquest of India commenced in a struggle to maintain the commercial interests of the East India trading company there against French rivals. Its first extensions were owing far more to the ardour and energy of local governors than to any schemes of conquest at home. After Bengal and Madras, all the rest followed step by step, almost inevitably, by way of defending and making secure what was already possessed. It is true there are some unpleasant pages in the history of the conquest of India, but the worst of them were temporary and quickly passing severities such as took place at the suppression of the Sepoy mutiny. If racial hegemony or overlordship is to exist in the world at all—and every great Power to-day, even the United States, furnishes an example of it—there is little to be said against the mild character of British rule in India and much to be said of the peace and civil order which it maintains amongst that vast and heterogeneous assemblage of races and creeds. The history of civilization is that of a slow strug-

gle out of conditions of brutal force and it is quite possible by asking too much to lose some of the good we possess.

South Africa, in its original form of the Dutch colony at the Cape of Good Hope, fell to Britain as a result of the struggle with the French Revolution. The British government had no thought of putting a foot at the Cape when the French seizure of Holland made it necessary to secure that half-way port of call to India against French cruisers and privateers. From any other point of view the Cape was then considered a possession of little worth, even by the Dutch themselves. After Cape Colony passed into British hands British emigration to its remote eastern parts, near the Kaffir settlements, was welcome to the Boers of Bruintjes Hoogte themselves and along with emigration to Natal, where the Zulus were, eventually formed, in a peaceful enough way, proper British colonies in South Africa, that of Natal being purely British. It was in defence of these long established British settlements as well as of later acquired interests in Rhodesia, Kimberley and elsewhere, that Britain was forced to go to war with the Transvaal State, which though small was very military in its way and had more than merely defensive schemes against the British power and the British settlements. And the Transvaal war first made possible the present peaceful, united and free South African Federation. Doubtful commercial ambitions no doubt had their part amongst the disputes which led to the Transvaal war, as they have their part in most things nowadays, but the main cause lay in an absolutely necessary defence of a part of the British Empire and a British population against aggressive designs. Nothing can be more absurd than to compare Britain's war with the Boers with Germany's invasion of Belgium which the German Chancellor himself admitted had no other excuse than military strategy.

Australia, New Zealand, Western Canada, have grown up by peaceful settlement on neglected wilds and here and there by the displacement of savage tribes.

Egypt, Gibraltar, and some small dependencies in which British control has replaced Dutch or Danish are no doubt more deliberate cases of military conquest and the securing of strategic positions for war and commerce. But in general it may be said not only that a large part of the Empire has its

origin in peaceful settlement, but that even the rest of it has not been acquired by any deliberate plan or preconceived design of conquest but has come as the result of struggles and conflicts which the British people would have been glad to avoid if they could. Treitschke even sneers at the growth of the British Empire as due to accident and good fortune. Like a true German following his Idea recklessly, he chooses to forget that to keep what she has got has involved Britain in hard fighting by sea and land in every generation.

Still it is in this way that it has come about that though the British Empire is one of the greatest the world has known and has been maintained at times only by great struggles, yet the British people both at home and in the colonies are on the whole a peace-loving people and have on the whole had peace-loving governors. Even Pitt, whatever his Continental reputation is, liked war as little as Walpole and did his best to avoid it as long as it could be avoided with safety and honour. And in the present conflict no one who has any political sense can doubt that a Premier like Mr. Asquith would have given much to be able to avoid war. In short, the British people have never been indoctrinated with the idea of war and conquest as an ideal of national life in the same way as German Kings and Kaisers, German Chancellors and War Ministers, German historians and professors have succeeded in indoctrinating the German people with the ideal of military training and the virtues of war and conquest. In this respect the maintenance of a strong navy has a different significance from a military system which turns a nation into an armed camp. In itself a navy is rather a defensive weapon than an effective means of aggression or domination; and its service affects only a small sea-faring part of the population. Its psychological effect on a people cannot be compared with that of a great military supremacy which has always tempted nations with visions of world domination. Throughout the British Empire, except perhaps in Australia, the danger is on the other side, in a tendency to shut the eyes to the fact that war is, under the present social and commercial conditions of the world, always a possible contingency. As long as there are any States in the world willing and ready to make war or to begin aggressive action, no single nation however peacefully disposed can be sure of avoiding war honourably and safely.

That is an evident fact yet it is one which many of our Pacifists do not seem to see.

Pacifism in Britain.

There has always been a strong 'Peace Party' in Britain if you include in that term not only those who object to war on any account and think it can always be avoided, but also those who for various reasons have such an aversion to war that they can with difficulty bring themselves to see the necessity of it or of preparing for it. Financiers and business men, though they often make good hauls out of a 'little war,' are generally seriously disturbed by the prospect of a great or doubtful one. Radical M.P.'s and editors, who are not normally of very pacific temper or addicted to the soft answer that turns away wrath, nevertheless show as a rule great irritation at any forecasts of war or at proposals to strengthen the army. War talk has a tendency to interfere with their own campaigning and they are inclined, therefore, to look on it with suspicion as one of the weapons of the enemy—I mean of course of the opposite political party. When Lord Roberts sounded his note of warning to the British people a few years ago and urged a scheme of national service, *The Nation* declared at once that "there was no German peril" and denounced the scheme as "a plot for the destruction of Liberalism and for abolition of civil freedom." (Dec. 7, 1912.) *The Westminster Gazette*, the *Manchester Guardian*, the *Daily News* and other influential organs of opinion kept on to the last assuring the nation that the danger from German designs was a mere bogey, set up by Tories and Jingoists. Mr. Spender in a pamphlet on the relations of England and Germany declared there was "no question looming ahead which need bring the German and British peoples into collision." Sir W. P. Byles, Radical member for Salford, declared that he believed England has "no enemies" and that a standing army was not necessary for the country. (March 24, 1913.) "Whom did we want to kill?" Sir W. asked the House with ire; "whose houses did we want to burn?" Mr. Keir Hardie thought "a bold, firm statement that next year our Dreadnought programme would be a blank would produce an instantaneous effect on the German Empire." (March 18, 1912.) One does not know what Mr. Keir Hardie's idea of the German Empire was, but at least the Kaiser and Chancellor von

Bethmann-Hollweg had already proclaimed clearly and officially that it would have no effect on them. Just a year before Mr. Keir Hardie's statement, Bethmann-Hollweg in the Reichstag had declined to have anything to do with schemes of disarmament as involving in his opinion an impossible adjustment of forces by consent, and he had pointedly remarked: "When a people will not or cannot continue to spend enough on its armaments to be able to make its way in the world, then it falls back into the second rank and sinks down to the role of a 'super' on the world's stage. There will always be another and a stronger there who is ready to take the place in the world which it has vacated." But probably Mr. Hardie's idea of Germany was that it was a country very much like England where "bold and firm" statements of opinion from Radical members and newspapers have an instantaneous effect on the army and navy estimates.

There seem indeed to have been a good many illusions amongst Radical members and editors about Germany. One was as to the power of the German Social Democrats to prevent war. *The Nation* spoke with the utmost confidence of Social Democracy in this respect, "with its twenty per cent. of soldiers in the German army," and the *Daily News* declared the day before the war broke out that "Socialism in Germany only awaits such a moment as this to overthrow the despotism that holds it under its iron heel." The most curious of these illusions, perhaps, was that of Mr. A. H. Scott, Radical member for Ashton-under-Lyne, who was evidently under the impression that if a German army did invade England (which he didn't seem to mind very much) it would at least respect honest toil and the sanctity of Labour's homes. Mr. Scott said: "He was one of a minority which opposed extravagant expenditure on the Navy, thinking we had enough instruments of destruction. Even if the Germans did come, they would not be such fools as to interfere with the industrial and wealth producing classes. They would only interfere with the land-owning, and if it were the latter's land that was protected then let them pay for the protection."

The contribution of Mr. W. P. Lane ("Norman Angell") combined a characteristically severe form of logic with a characteristic innocence of experience: "If Germany could conquer us, would any ordinary German subject be the better for

it? . . . The 'German' and the 'Englishman' are pure abstractions and do not in reality exist."

But a much more responsible and better informed class of politician than Sir W. Byles or Mr. Keir Hardie habitually preached a confident optimism which to say the least was dangerous in face of the utterances of official Germany, of a widespread and influential war literature, and of the general trend of German thought. That solid type of Liberal, the member of the Cobden Club, the inheritor of the great tradition of the Manchester School, could evidently not bring himself to think that the world about him had changed so much since the days when British ideals of popular and parliamentary rule, British ideas of trade and commerce as a practical gospel of peace were the admiration and model of all Europe. He probably did not realize the significance of the assault that had been made upon them by later German jurists, historians and philosophers. He is naturally a humane and peace-loving type, though German Treitschkes and philosophic followers of the Idea only see in him a hypocrite because he does every now and then rouse himself to defend his till as any other peaceful burgher might. But he is slow to see the necessity and would fain shut his eyes. "Time will show," writes Lord Loreburn in 1913, in a work published by the Cobden Club, "that the Germans have no aggressive designs against us, nor we against them; and then foolish people will cease to talk of a future war between us which will never take place." Not a few eminent men of the old Gladstonian bodyguard did their best to obscure the plain meaning of the last five years, or even the last ten years of German history as regards England. They could not believe the world or Britain was facing such a danger. Doubtless they knew or suspected that Germany had a design to crush France and that the Germanic Powers had combined with the Magyar to walk over Russian opposition in the Balkans. They must have known that meant war. Did they realize what Britain would be facing when Germany had crushed France in a three or four months war by sea as well as by land, for she would have been superior on both, and thrown Russia back as far as she wanted to throw her back? Britain, that for ten years past, remember, had been obliged to stand on her defence against Teutonic aggressiveness, that had supported France at Agadir and had

a certain mutual understanding with her for a defensive policy, Britain would have been facing an excited and victory-drunken army of four or six millions of Germans with nothing more than a little band of 160,000 trained soldiers—and perhaps a hastily assembled million of untrained citizens for whom there were neither officers nor munitions of war. And perhaps the French fleet, or most of it, would have been under German command. As late as August 8, Lord Courtney, Mr. Trevelyan, Mr. Hobhouse, Mr. Ramsay Macdonald and others signed a protest against Britain taking part in the war on the ground that “no fact had been disclosed which would make it otherwise than disastrous” to the interests of Britain to do so. I suppose they thought they could sit tight as in 1870 and let the belligerents fight it out. But 1914 was a very different situation from 1870. After a German victory over France and Russia, Britain would have stood alone with the burden of supporting anything that was left of international law or law of any kind in Europe. A few small and utterly cowed neutrals, Norway, Denmark, Holland, Greece, Roumania, could have given her no help. They know well, these small neutrals, what kind of “civilization” German rule means for alien races, if Professor E. G. Browne and the eight professors who protested against war with Germany as a “sin against civilization” do not. They know well that the ghost of freedom which still sits quivering amongst them to-day would have flitted off the horizon of Europe under Germanic domination.

Sir John Brunner deserves special mention. Only a year before the war broke out Sir John as President of the National Liberal Federation sent a circular to the Liberal associations urging them to pass resolutions which “would enable the Government to reduce armaments,” and he is quoted by the *Spectator* as saying that he would “infinitely prefer the protection of recognized international law to the protection afforded by our Navy.” Sir John of course knows now how much protection international law has given Belgium, or Danish or Norwegian merchant ships or even a powerful neutral like the United States.

Cabinet Utterances.

The effect of all these voices on the Government was naturally very considerable. It is quite plain from their policy,

from their action during the Agadir incident and otherwise, that some of them at least were fully aware of the danger from Germany's designs. They knew that they dare not face the situation that would be created if France were extinguished as a Power and Russia driven back perhaps to her limits in the 16th century by a huge Germanic and Magyar Federation. Naturally they felt their responsibility and were more cautious in their utterances than the Byleases and Spenders. But all the same in order to please the Radicals, Labour members, and Pacificists in general, and not to be thought Jingoos, they kept assuring the country that they did not see the slightest reason for apprehension. Mr. Churchill, speaking to the very Radical constituency of Dundee in 1909, scouted the idea of wasting public money on armaments as part of a showy "sensational Jingo policy" which might be popular with unthinking sections of the community, and declared the idea that there was an antagonism between the interests of Britain and Germany to be the "most fatal obsession that could benumb the brain of a statesman." In 1910 Mr. Asquith said he "could not discern in any quarter of the political horizon any cause of quarrel, direct or indirect, between us and that great and friendly nation (Germany)." Mr. Montagu, then First Lord of the Admiralty, gave the people the contemptuously emphatic advice: "Sleep comfortably in your beds." Some prominent Conservatives, also unwilling to be called Jingoos, took the same line in these days. Mr. Balfour "could not conceive what interest Germany had in attacking us" and "did not believe there would be war." Much later, in May, 1918, Mr. Harcourt, the Secretary for the Colonies, said as an argument against increasing the Army estimates: "I can conceive no circumstances in which Continental operations by our troops would not be a crime against the people in this country." With the same object in view, Mr. Lloyd-George told us that for twenty years our relations with Germany had never been so good. As for Lord Haldane, he went about the country preaching a gospel of the pacific intentions of the Kaiser, and the civilizing mission of Germany. He was an optimist, he said, and was proud of it. He scouted Lord Roberts' warnings with regard to Germany and boasted he had buried Lord Roberts' scheme for national service—deep, namely, in his own scheme of "Territorial" volunteers. He admitted Lord Roberts had led troops

with success in the field. "But it was one thing to lead troops in the field, and another to be a strategist. Until a man was a strategist he could not fashion plans and organizations for the defence of his country." He said that was just the kind of understanding he missed in Lord Roberts. (Speeches at Bradford 1911, and the Eighty Club 1912).

And all this was at a time when official Germany was giving the most unequivocal expression to its warlike temper and designs, after Germany had made her attendance at the Hague conference conditional on no motion being brought forward for disarmament, when the Liberals of Germany, even the advanced or Fortschritt group, if I remember rightly, had joined in passing the great armament Bills without a murmur (as "necessary to secure the future of Germany"), and when Bethmann-Hollweg was telling us, in reply to President Taft's schemes for arbitration, that a nation that didn't like the burden of war-armaments, could step down—and out. I have already quoted his words. And General von Einen, ex-Minister of War, was threatening us with the *furor teutonicus* over our opposition in Morocco.* For although we had let Germany have her way in most things, in the control of Turkey, in the Balkans, in Samoa, in the matter of the Portuguese colonies, should they ever come into the market, and in other things, yet we had to oppose her attempt to establish a naval base at the mouth of the Mediterranean. That would be the same thing as reducing the effectual strength of the British navy by one-half. But it was not only official Germany whose utterances were menacing, the Germany that writes and theorizes was quietly seething with war literature, with exhaustive and most Germanic statements of the case against Britain which would include such ancient matters as the disapproving attitude of British diplomacy over Prussia's attack on Denmark and seizure of Schleswig-Holstein, or forgotten sayings of Wellington or Castlereagh at the Vienna Congress.

The Government's concessions to extreme Pacifism were not mere words. On the eve of the great European conflagration, the estimates for the British army and the expenditure

* "The *furor teutonicus* is with us to-day, and we ourselves know it. It will be good for others if they also realize its existence."—General von Einen.

on ordnance and munitions had been considerably reduced. Lord Haldane when he came into office as War Minister cut down the estimates by two millions. He told the good Scotch folks of Auchterarder that he had "cut off nine battalions." They were fine battalions, he said, but he "could not use them." In 1914 the small force of Royal Artillery was reduced by over 5,000 men and the army in general by about 80,000. It was already smaller than that of a third-class European Power.

All that should be a proof at any rate that Britain was guiltless of aggressive designs for she went into this war quite unprepared except for sea-fighting. In 1912 Lord Haldane in fact made a merit of their want of preparation. "The British," he told the Glasgow people, "were always a nation of splendid fighters. They were never ready, but they fought the better the less ready they were."

After reading the many utterances of eminent British statesmen and politicians and of influential organs of opinion like the *Westminster Gazette*, the *Nation*, the *Daily News*, etc., which Mr. Maxse has conveniently collected in his "Potsdam Diary," all assuring us that the danger from German designs was a mere bogey, I do not wonder that many of our Canadian leaders hesitated to believe in the cry of "emergency." How should they be expected to know more about German politics than British statesmen and influential London editors, whose proper business it was to know?

Then the war broke out and there was a sudden realization of the great issues it involved for the British Empire and indeed for the world. The revelations, recantations and explanations came thick and fast from official leaders and celebrities of all sorts. At Liverpool Mr. Winston Churchill now revealed to the country, that they had known all about Germany's designs "for eight or nine years" back:

"Germany began the building of a great navy for our undoing. He was glad to be able to tell his audience what he thought about it now. Every detail of the German scheme proved that it was meant for us—for our exclusive benefit. . . . I have had to see every day evidence of the espionage system which Germany maintained in this country. I have had the evidence put under my eye month after month of the agents whom they have maintained year after year here in great numbers. . . . We have been made the subject in the last eight or nine years, just in the same way as France was before 1870 and

Austria was before 1866 and Denmark was before 1864, of careful, deliberate, scientific, military reconnaissance. Well, we knew all about it."

Two weeks later Mr. Asquith said at Cardiff:

"If we here in Great Britain had abstained and remained neutral, forsworn our word, deserted our friends, faltered and compromised with the plain dictates of our duty—nay, if we had not shown ourselves ready to strike with all our forces at the common enemy of civilization and freedom, there would have been nothing left for us and our country but to veil her face in shame, and to be ready in her turn—for her time would have come—to be ready in her turn to share the doom which she would richly have deserved—and go down after centuries of glorious life, go down to her grave unwept, unhonoured and unsung."

Lord Haldane also assures us now that he was fully aware of the danger from Germany. In an address which he made two months ago to the National Liberal Club, he said:

"I knew something of Germany. I knew the perils of the situation—where the powder magazine was—and I was most anxious that that most unjust and untrue suspicion (that Britain sought to crush Germany) should be got out of the minds of the party in Germany which held the scales. It was not to be. The War Party dominated. I realized that we were fighting for our lives. I did not have the smallest doubt about the imperative necessity of taking part in this war. Had we stayed out with the War Party in Germany in the ascendant I think our shrift would have been very short."

Lloyd-George was franker, as his nature is, or perhaps he knew less. He declared that "when this war broke out, there was not a man in the Cabinet who thought that war with Germany was a possibility." In a speech on the Munitions Bill he admitted to the House of Commons that "we" had been completely hoodwinked:

"Germany has been piling up material. Until she was ready she was friendly with everybody. . . . We really thought an era of peace and good-will had come. At that moment she was forging and hiding away enormous war stores to attack her neighbours unawares and murder them in *their sleep*. If that trickery is to succeed, all will crumble into dust. It is essential for the basis of international goodwill, for the peace of the world that it should fail, and it is up to us to see that it does so."

It is not by way of reproach altogether that I recall these utterances before and after the war, but for the sake of the

lesson they should teach. At first sight it looks like mere dilettanteism on the part of British statesmanship, and no doubt there was a good deal of that in some quarters, though there were evidently wiser heads there too who prepared for contingencies as far as they could. But it is evident that the men who saw and knew dared not tell the country what they really thought about the situation. And what other explanation is there of this except that the extreme Radical section of the Liberal party succeeded in coercing their wiser leaders into silence or into utterances which practically deceived the country? Scientific treatment of national problems is hardly possible where mere organs of party or class fury have so much influence. In short, the present combination of Liberalism and Radicalism, especially Labour Radicalism, neither gives the moderate Liberal leader the possibility of a free and sound development nor the Radical party the education of a really responsible position. It forces the one into a rather hypocritical attitude and makes reckless irresponsible speakers of the other. Neither side faces the realities before it or is quite clear with itself as to what form progress can take. There is abstract moral attitudinizing on the one hand and unscientific clamour on the other.

Pacifism in general will also have to consider the situation more scientifically. There is a loose kind of pacifism which is vaguely founded on Christian sentiment against war. Germany, one of the most powerful nations in the world, has practically abandoned that point of view, and proclaimed war and conquest as the true path of progress for nations, and it is true also that there are no great nations in the world whose history does not contain at least episodes of military conquest, however they may explain them. Nevertheless, the Christian sentiment against war, when it is reasonably understood, may still be considered as a limiting or regulative ideal of civilization. But there is a class of pacifists who not only overlook the fact that the kingdom of heaven is not yet realized on earth but are equally forgetful of the fact that such kingdom, or such approximation to it as man is capable of creating, has to be established by struggle and conflict—material struggle and conflict—with the lower powers of nature in man; that is the history of human civilization; you cannot sit down and let a supposed divine law work out things for you, while you

are comfortably busy taking money into the till and preparing nothing but high speeches at conferences. That would simply be to abandon civilization to the control of the more brutal forces. I suppose that is why the great official churches of Christianity, Catholic or Protestant, have never absolutely refused to acknowledge the principle of war, but only peculiar sects who have no idea of the struggle by which man has advanced from a state of nature, as the jurists call it, to civil society. The nations, therefore, that mean to support this process of civilization or humanity must do it and may long have to do it with the sword by their side. Human affairs are very mixed; in one century it may be one nation that is menacing others and in another, another. It may even be that such domination or hegemony is in the circumstances justifiable by the spiritual force it brings with it and it may succeed.

Some high idea of his destiny in this respect seems to have supported the German in his present aggression on the humanitarian principles and standards of civilization. "Our might shall create a new law in Europe," writes Maximilian Harden, though I would not quote him were it not that he only says more frankly what many other German writers have said in a more roundabout way. In any case the nations can only do their best to discern in what direction freedom and progress lie on any given occasion and act accordingly.

But this form of pacificism at least contains a moral ideal, however vaguely it may be founded on the idea of applying certain sayings of the Sermon on the Mount to international affairs when we never think of applying them anywhere else. It is a spiritual ideal which has its value as a modifying force.

Commercial Pacificism.

A less ideal form of pacificism is that which would avoid war at all costs because it disturbs trade and throws the financial world into confusion. In the last days of diplomatic efforts when the war-cloud drew nearer England, the grave issues revealing themselves ever more clearly in Germany's action, the *Daily News* made the following pathetic appeal to the heart of the nation:

"If we remained neutral we should be, from the commercial point of view, in precisely the same position as the United States. We should be able to trade with all the belligerents (so far as the war allows of trade with them); we should be able to

capture the bulk of their trade in neutral markets; we should keep our expenditure down; we should keep out of debt; we should have healthy finances."

So Mr. Hirst of the *Economist* told the country that "as soon as a proclamation of neutrality is issued . . . we believe that a large and legitimate business would begin at once in leading stocks." This looks at first as if there was a strong sense of realities amongst us. But it is a false sense, I think. If the military aristocracies of the German and the Magyar had succeeded in crushing France and Russia, even British stocks, I imagine, would be lower than they are and permanently lower. But old England was not so money-ridden or beuevilled as they thought, and had come to realize that the old fight for the freedom of civilization was on once more, and that the best traditions and the future of the Empire were involved in it.

A finer form of the commercial gospel, the noblest form, perhaps, it is capable of, once lay in the Cobden doctrine that expansion of trade and commerce necessarily makes for peace between nations and will, the greater it becomes, tend the more to remove the danger of war. Cobdenism and Free Trade once went the round of the world with success, about the Sixties, England's position in commerce giving it great credit. But its basis was never wholly trustworthy as any one who reads the history of Dutch and Portuguese trade wars, Venetian and Genoese trade wars, English and Dutch trade wars, and other conflicts of the kind may reflect; every century is full of trade wars from the early battles of Hansa and Norse ships for the commerce of the Baltic downwards. Especially in a commercial age like ours when every great banking syndicate or influential commercial group of interests is looking to its home government to support its interests, to help it to secure concessions, trading rights, port privileges, and what not, to subsidize its steamship lines, to maintain 'the open door' and equal treatment in China, Morocco, or Turkey, or somewhere else, in such an age the government tends to be closely identified with the rivalry of its great trading corporations. The German governments are so particularly, often holding large interests in them. And that rivalry is of the keenest and most sensitive kind. It is the cause of at least half the disputes that have occurred during the last ten or twelve years between

Germany, France and England. Shall Germany have Wallfisch Bay or not? Germany wants this or that slice of Congoland, or trade guarantees in Morocco. German liners are ousting the old P. & O. from its position in the East. And did not one but lately hear the cry? Now, O Americans is your chance to capture the German trade with South American countries. President Wilson himself was with difficulty prevented from turning the State into a shipping firm for that purpose. Germany knows that commerce is under modern conditions a form of international conflict and treats it vigorously and scientifically as such, with the success which all the world has seen and commented on. The Cobden Club, however, and not a few official Englishmen still continue to speak as if trade were nothing but an evangel of peace and good will amongst men. "The world," writes the Right Hon. Herbert Samuel, Postmaster General, in a pamphlet on the relations of England and Germany, "is gradually coming to see that rivalry in trade is no more a reason for enmity between nations than it is for personal enmity between shopkeepers in neighbouring streets." I would be glad if Mr. Samuel were right but his pleasantly humane words glide over the surface of problems which have troubled philosophers and jurists of all times. What he means to say is that we should all submit to competition with a good grace—even amongst nations over whom there is no tribunal. Yes, granted, and then—. Well, when we look into it again, it means a little more: we must all submit to be ousted or extinguished by competition with a good grace—even amongst nations over whom there is no tribunal. Well, granted, though with some inward quivering. But when we look at it again, it means still a little more, namely this: we must all submit to be ousted or extinguished by competition with Christian grace, even when it is unfair, when the dice are loaded against us, say by State influences, or secret subsidies, or diplomatic pressure, etc., for there is no tribunal over States to which we can appeal. By this time we see the question is getting complicated and hardly soluble by Mr. Samuel's happy phrases about "the development of a foreign nation being a reason not for hostility but for gratitude," since the benefits of wealth and culture spread far beyond their place of origin.

And yet, curious to say, if you believe the Germans, commercial jealousy is Britain's chief reason for engaging in this

war. The Germans are wrong there. Britain would never seek in war a remedy for mere commercial loss, though of course she must protect the commercial interests of the Empire as well as she can everywhere.

Mr. Samuel is a Jew (one of the potentialities of the future Mr. A. G. Gardiner calls him), and I would not like to speculate about him; but it might seem to many as if the Englishman in general rather liked to reside in a sort of moral confusion of ideas or sentiment from which the German has resolutely set out to free himself. There may perhaps be a moral confusion in things—between the material and spiritual principles in the world—to which the Englishman's attitude corresponds better. I hope there is. After all, if you consider his history, there seems to be somewhere in his general policy a wisdom which brings things to his side, or at any rate has brought them there in the past, a wisdom which prompted Tim Healy to ask angrily years ago during the Boer war how long "God was to be on the side of England." One must conclude it is due to moral qualities of moderation, good temper, and a decent respect for justice and humanity—which have their weight on the course of events—combined with energy of action when action at length becomes necessary. Scientific treatment of national problems, however, is difficult in a country where Byesses have so much to say. "We will muddle through somehow," is the Englishman's stock expression for his way of facing a crisis. It is often his modest way of saying that he is doing his best and has confidence in his cause and his resources, but it also confesses the lack of scientific preparation. How long is that to succeed in an age which is becoming more scientific every year?

JAMES CAPPON.

